

Diversity Management In USDA's Changing Workforce



The Human Capital Challenge –
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Diversity is Distinct from Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO)

- To start this discussion, it is important to identify the basic difference between diversity management and EEO:
- Managing Diversity is Voluntary
- EEO/Affirmative Action is Mandatory



Distinctions of EEO/Affirmative Action vs. Managing Diversity

■ ***EEO/Affirmative Action:***

- Legal, Social, Moral Justification
- Focuses on Race, Gender, Ethnicity
- Changes the Mix of People

■ ***Diversity:***

- Productivity, efficiency, and quality
- Focuses on all elements of diversity
- Changes the systems/operations



Distinctions of EEO/Affirmative Action vs. Managing Diversity*

■ ***EEO/Affirmative Action:***

- Perception of Preference
- Short-term and limited
- Grounded in Assimilation

■ ***Diversity:***

- Perception of Equality
- Long-term and ongoing
- Grounded in individuality



Diversity Is

- Inclusive of All Employees Beyond:
- Race and Gender
- Age or Tenure
- Permanent or Temporary
- Geographic Considerations
- Personality



Effective Diversity Management

- Promotes productivity and respect for the differences and similarities each person brings to the workforce.
- Recognizes a myriad of personal and organizational characteristics that may be similar or different.
- Makes for sound business practices
- Celebrates contributions of diversity



Diversity Initiative

- Creates a work environment that allows every employee to reach full potential
- Utilizes employees' talents
- Boosts employees' morale



Diversity Initiatives

- Attract diverse employees and trainees
- Helps reduce complaints/grievances
- Promotes healthy work environment
- Encourage creativity with productivity
- Created the Secretary's Diversity Advisory Council and seven Employee Advisory Councils - staffed with Program Managers.



From Theory to Application – Diversity in USDA

- Appointed Co-Chairs: Lou Gallegos, Assistant Secretary of Administration and Clyde Thompson, Associate Assistant Secretary of Administration
- DAC advises USDA Secretary on issues raised by the Employee Advisory Councils
- **Advise USDA leadership on ensuring that the talents and skills of all employees are fully developed, recognized, and utilized.**



USDA Secretary's Diversity Advisory Council include:

- African American Advisory Council
- American Indian/Alaska Native Advisory Council
- Asian American/Pacific Islander Advisory Council
- Gay and Lesbian Advisory Council



USDA Secretary's Diversity Advisory Council started with special provisions for these three councils:

- Secretary's Advisory Committee for Employees with Disabilities (Special Hiring Authority and Executive Order)
- Secretary's Hispanic Advisory Council (Executive Order)
- Women Employees Advisory Council (Federally Employed Women's Program)



Cross-Cutting Issues

- Career Opportunities/Development
- Equitable Promotion Potential
- Training
- Communication



Successes of DAC include

- Development of a new recruitment exhibit and companion video
- USDA representatives have recruited at Conferences and Program Managers of the Employee Advisory Councils have been a part of these efforts by sharing diversity with USDA customers at such conferences as FEW, BIG, and LULAC.



Successes of DAC include: USDA Mentoring Program

Open to All Employees Nationwide

- 107 Mentee Applications
- 65 Mentor Applications
- 36 Pairs (72 Participants)
- First Training Sept. 30-Oct. 2: St. Louis
- Next Class Feb. 2003 (Date TBD)



Successes include

- USDA's participation in DOD's Computer Electronic Accommodations Program will provide computer assistive technology for employees with disabilities at no cost.
- Educational forums and listening sessions held nationwide to provide employees with opportunity to express issues and concerns.



Human Capital Crisis

- Skills Gap Identifies 21 Series (57% of USDA Workforce)
- Gap Based on Recruitment Difficulty, Mission Criticality, etc.
- Aggressive Recruitment from Diverse Sources Presents one solution



New SES Candidate Development Program

- Fall Announcement – (October timeframe)
- Winter 2003 - First Class
- 50 Candidates
- GS-14's and GS-15's are eligible
- Check the OHRM - Diversity Advisory Council web site for more information.



Next Steps

- Developing Human Capital Plan-Critical to President's Management Agenda Implementation. Plan will include:
- Leadership and Succession Planning
- Highly Performing and Diverse Workforce
- Workforce Development to Manage Skills Gap



Conclusion

- Working together, we can create a work environment that allows every employee to reach full potential and make maximum contribution.
- Together, by recognizing shared values among employees, customers, and stakeholders, USDA will achieve a synergistic 21st Century workforce.